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Corresponding germination of seeds, still within the ripe head of the parent plant, is not particularly common unless unusually favorable conditions for germination exist under which the heads are, through some abnormal circumstance, held captive. Such a case is shown by specimens in our collection of the heads of the common burdock.

MUSEUM OF THE BROOKLYN INSTITUTE
OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

THE FERTILIZATION OF THE EEL-GRASS

[The availability of the subjoined extract for TORREYA has been a matter of considerable speculation and not a little misgiving. It is one of thirty diminutive essays, all in a similar vein, and all highly charged with the imaginative poetry of the greatest of our modern mystic poets. The editor would have had little misgiving if the acceptance of the "botany" of this excerpt were as sure as its instant recognition as literature of a particularly charming style. Doubtless there are botanists who will question the writer, with a degree of vehemence measured by their antipathy to things of the imagination, when applied to their chosen science. But whatever of alleged "nature-faking" the unbeliever thinks he reads into the paragraphs below, it were well to remember that the writer, except for a trivial error, enclosed in square brackets, is perfectly correct as to his facts, and that it is only with his interpretation of them that one has any true quarrel. And it is precisely at these interpretative features of the essay that many botanists will become most excited. Not a few will immediately wax expansive over the perfectly irrelevant commonplace that plants do not "feel," nor "see," nor do a score of things that an imaginative writer may credit them with doing. All the while forgetting, that by the exercise of his imagination, a writer with a somewhat different perspective from that of the average botanist, may so change the point of view, so visualize the every-day, common thing, that the reader will never quite look at it with his customary indifference; never quite put it into the category of those in-

teresting things that nearly everyone forgets. It is just this quality of forever fixing in one's mind the fertilization of *Vallisneria* that has made the printing of this essay a privilege.

N. T.]

"We must not leave the aquatic plants without briefly mentioning the life of the most romantic of them all: the legendary *Vallisneria*, an hydrocharad whose nuptials form the most tragic episode in the love-history of the flowers. The *Vallisneria* is a rather insignificant herb, possessing none of the strange grace of the water-lily or of certain submersed verdant plants. But it seems as though nature had delighted in giving it a beautiful idea. Its whole existence is spent at the bottom of the water, in a sort of half-slumber, until the wedding-hour comes, when it aspires to a new life. Then the female plant slowly uncoils the long spiral of its peduncle, rises, emerges, and floats and blossoms on the surface of the pond. From a neighboring stem, the male flowers, which see it through the sunlit water rise in their turn, full of hope, towards the one that rocks, that awaits them, that calls them to a fairer world. But when they have come half-way, they feel themselves suddenly held back: their stalk, the very source of their life, is too short; they will never reach the abode of light, the only spot in which the union of the stamens and pistils can be achieved!"

"Is there any more cruel inadvertance or ordeal in nature? Picture the tragedy of that longing, the inaccessible so nearly attained, the transparent fatality, the impossible with not a visible obstacle! It would be insoluble, like our own tragedy upon this earth, were it not that an unexpected element is mingled with it. Did the males foresee the disillusion to which they would be subjected? One thing is certain, that they have locked up in their hearts a bubble of air, even as we lock up in our souls a thought of desperate deliverance. It is as though they hesitated for a moment; then with a magnificent effort, the finest, the most supernatural that I know of in all the pageantry of the insects and the flowers, in order to rise to happiness they deliberately break the bond that attaches them to life. They tear themselves from their peduncle and, with an incom-

parable flight, amid bubbles of gladness, their petals dart up and break the surface of the water. Wounded to death, but radiant and free they float for a moment beside their heedless brides and the union is accomplished, whereupon the victims drift away to perish, while the wife, already a mother, closes her corolla [calyx], in which lives their last breath, rolls up her spiral and descends to the depths, there to ripen the fruit of the heroic kiss." [From Maurice Maeterlinck's essay on the "*Intelligence of the Flowers*" in "*The Measure of the Hours*." Dodd, Mead & Co., 1910.]

LOCAL FLORA NOTES—X

BY NORMAN TAYLOR

Species

Specimens wanted from

GERANIACEAE

<i>Geranium Robertianum</i> L.	The coastal plain.
<i>G. sibiricum</i> L.	Established in the range?*
<i>G. pusillum</i> Burm.	New York or northern New Jersey.
<i>G. Columbianum</i> L.	Pennsylvania
<i>G. Bicknellii</i> Britton.	Anywhere in the range.
<i>G. Pyrenaicum</i> L.	Is it known in the range?
<i>Erodium cicutarium</i> (L.) L'Her.	Northern New York or New Jersey.

OXALIDACEAE

<i>Oxalis Acetosella</i> L.	Below 1000 ft. elevation.
<i>O. Bushii</i> Small.	New Jersey.
<i>O. rufa</i> Small.	Anywhere in the range.
<i>O. stricta</i> L.	Above 1000 ft. elevation.

* The local flora range as prescribed by the Club's Preliminary Catalogue of 1888 is as follows: All of the state of Connecticut; Long Island; in New York the counties bordering the Hudson River up to and including Columbia and Greene, also Sullivan and Delaware counties; all of New Jersey; and Pike, Wayne, Monroe, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Northampton, Lehigh, Carbon, Bucks, Berks, Schuylkill, Montgomery, Philadelphia, Delaware and Chester counties in Pennsylvania.